

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 EB-08 COME-00
HA-05 ACDA-12 /130 W
-----127083 191833Z /42

P R 191533Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6066
INFO AMEMBASSY BISSAU
AMEMBASSY BONN
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CAPETOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR PINT AO PO US
SUBJECT: PORTUGUESE RELATIONS WITH THE FORMER COLONIES:
AN ASSESSMENT

REF: (A) LISBON 4406 (DTG 051457Z JUNE 78), (B) LISBON 4356
(DTG 141214Z JUNE 78)

SUMMARY: RELATIONS BETWEEN PORTUGAL AND HER FORMER COLONIES ARE CURRENTLY ON THE UPSWING, HIGHLIGHTED BY THE UPCOMING EANES-NETO BILATERAL MEETING. A SUCCESSFUL ENCOUNTER MAY HELP PORTUGAL ESTABLISH ITSELF AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN AFRICA AND THE WEST, AND HAS IMPORTANCE FOR U.S. INTERESTS. END SUMMARY.

1. GETTING IN SYNC: PORTUGUESE RELATIONS WITH HER FORMER COLONIES HAVE BEEN CHARACTERIZED BY A NOW-UP, NOW-DOWN SYNDROME. RECENTLY, HOWEVER, RELATIONS HAVE BEGUN TO SYNCHRONIZE. ALTHOUGH THE TEMPO VARIES FROM COUNTRY TO COUNTRY, RECENT EVENTS SHOW THE IMPROVEMENTS:
--CAPE VERDE AND GUINEA BISSAU: ALONG WITH SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE, THESE TWO SMALL FORMER COLONIES HAVE LED THE WAY IN MAKING PEACE WITH THE EX-METROPOLE. THE GOP PULLED OUT THE STOPS FOR THE STATE VISIT TO PORTUGAL OF PRESIDENT CABRAL OF BISSAU IN JANUARY, THE FIRST BY A CHIEF OF STATE OF A FORMER COLONY. PRESIDENT EANES'S THREE-HOUR STOP IN CAPE VERDE IN MAY ON THE WAY TO THE NATO SUMMIT WAS THE FIRST VISIT BY A PORTUGUESE CHIEF OF STATE TO A FORMER COLONY. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, CULTURAL, AND ECONOMIC AGREEMENTS ARE BEING IMPLEMENTED IN BOTH CAPE VERDE AND GUINEA BISSAU. THE GOP IS PROVIDING SOME
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MILITARY TRAINING TO GUINEA BISSAU. THE GOP, THE GOCV, AND THE GOGB ALL AGREE RELATIONS ARE "EXCELLENT."
--MOZAMBIQUE: THE OFTEN TROUBLED RELATIONS WITH MOZAMBIQUE HAVE IMPROVED AT A SNAIL'S PACE. BUT THE GPRM HAS HAD AN AMBASSADOR IN PORTUGAL FOR SEVERAL MONTHS, AND BOTH COUNTRIES HAVE RATIFIED A GENERAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT SIGNED IN 1975. BECAUSE OF MUTUAL SUSPICIONS, HOWEVER, IMPLEMENTATION OF THAT AGREEMENT'S PROVISIONS HAS BEEN SLOW. (IN RESPONSE TO A GPRM REQUEST MADE LAST YEAR FOR 300 TEACHERS, THE GOP HAS PLACED 38 AND IS CURRENTLY PROCESSING 11 MORE APPLICATIONS.) GPRM FOREIGN MINISTER JOAQUIM CHISSANO HAS JUST ACCEPTED AN INVITATION FROM THE GOP TO VISIT PORTUGAL. THE GOP AND GPRM CHARACTERIZE THEIR RELATIONS AS "NORMAL" AND "IMPROVING."

--ANGOLA: RELATIONS WITH ANGOLA HAVE SHOWN THE GREATEST FLUCTUATION, BUT ARE CURRENTLY ON AN UPSWING. THE FIRST ANGOLAN AMBASSADOR TO PORTUGAL ARRIVED THIS MONTH, AND THE CONSERVATIVE CENTER DEMOCRAT (CDS) FOREIGN MINISTER, VITOR SA MACHADO, (HIMSELF A NATIVE OF ANGOLA), HELD "SUCCESSFUL" TALKS IN EARLY JUNE IN NEW YORK WITH ANGOLAN PRIME MINISTER LOPO DO NASCIMENTO AND FOREIGN MINISTER PAULO JORGE. THE ANGOLAN AND PORTUGUESE MINISTERS OF TRADE WILL EXCHANGE

VISITS NEXT MONTH. CLEAR EVIDENCE OF THE DESIRE TO KEEP THE MOMENTUM GOING IS THE EANES-NETO MEETING IN BISSAU SCHEDULED FOR JUNE 24-25. BECAUSE OF THE PRESIDENTIAL INVOLVEMENT AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE TO PORTUGAL'S CONCEPT OF ITSELF AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN AFRICA AND THE WEST, ALL ELEMENTS OF THE GOP FOREIGN POLICY APPARATUS ARE FOCUSED ON THAT MEETING.

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HA-05 ACDA-12 /130 W
-----127153 191833Z /42

P R 191533Z JUN 78
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2. THE IMPORTANCE OF AFRICA: THE REASONS BEHIND THE IMPORTANCE OF AFRICA TO PORTUGAL ARE COMPLEX AND DEEPLY ROOTED, BUT SOME ASPECTS CAN BE HIGHLIGHTED:

--PATERNALISM: HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL TIES ARE STRONG, AND WILL REMAIN SO. THE PORTUGUESE, LIKE THE BRITISH AND FRENCH, FEEL A PROPRIETARY INTEREST TOWARD THEIR FORMER COLONIES-- AN INTEREST WHICH THEY PERCEIVE AS THREATENED BY STRONG SOVIET AND CUBAN EFFORTS. IN ANGOLA, IN PARTICULAR, THE PORTUGUESE BELIEVE THEY ARE BEING "PUSHED OUT" BY THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS.

--GUILT COMPLEX: COUPLED WITH THE PROPRIETARY INTEREST ARE LINGERING GUILT FEELINGS ABOUT THE RESULTS OF THE DECOLONIZATION PROCESS. THE DEEP DIVISIONS IN PORTUGUESE SOCIETY FLOWING FROM THE ABRUPT COLONIAL WITHDRAWAL ARE STILL HEALING. THE PORTUGUESE PUBLIC IS DISSATISFIED WITH THE RADICALISM OF THE FRELIMO REGIME IN MOZAMBIQUE, AND THE ANGOLAN CIVIL WAR WITH ITS STRONG SOVIET AND CUBAN PRESENCE. THESE FEELINGS ARE ESPECIALLY STRONG ON THE POLITICAL RIGHT. BY ESTABLISHING GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE FORMER COLONIES, THE GOP BELIEVES IT CAN, TO A DEGREE, MODERATE THE POLICIES OF THE GPRM AND GPRA, THEREBY SALVING DOMESTIC IRRITATION AND HELPING TO HARNESS PORTUGUESE ENERGIES MORE FULLY TO THE PRIORITY TASK OF ECONOMIC RECOVERY.

--FACING THE EUROPEAN OPTION: PORTUGAL HAS FIRMLY OPTED FOR EUROPE AND THE WEST. BUT PORTUGAL IS A SMALL, POOR NATION AND KNOWS IT. THE GOP FEELS THAT SUCCESS IN ESTABLISHING ITSELF AS A BRIDGE BETWEEN THE WEST AND ITS EX-COLONIES WOULD ADD TO ITS STATURE AMONG THE WESTERN NATIONS IT NOW LOOKS TO FOR ASSISTANCE.

--TAKING THE INITIATIVE: THE GOP, ESPECIALLY THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, SEES ITSELF GENERALLY AS REACTING TO EVENTS BEYOND ITS CONTROL. IN AFRICA, BY CONTRAST, THE GOP SEES AN

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OPPORTUNITY TO INITIATE POLICY AND INFLUENCE EVENTS IN AN AREA OF STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE.

3. THE ACTORS: THREE SETS OF ACTORS FORMULATE PORTUGAL'S AFRICAN POLICIES:

--MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS: BECAUSE PRIME MINISTER SOARES HAS TENDED TO BE HIS OWN FOREIGN MINISTER, THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN THE PAST HAS HAD A LIMITED

ROLE IN FORMULATING POLICY TOWARD AFRICA. BUT FOREIGN MINISTER SA MACHADO IS ESTABLISHING HIMSELF AS A FOREIGN AFFAIRS LEADER IN HIS OWN RIGHT. UNDER HIS DIRECTION, THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IS PLANNING A MAJOR EXPANSION OF ITS DEPARTMENT OF COOPERATION, THE ENTITY WHICH CHANNELS AID REQUESTS AND IMPLEMENTS COOPERATION AGREEMENTS WITH THE FORMER COLONIES.

--THE POLITICAL PARTIES: THE PORTUGUESE COMMUNIST PARTY (PCP) ONCE DOMINATED RELATIONS WITH THE FORMER COLONIES, AND STILL MAINTAINS STRONG TIES WITH THE GOVERNING PARTIES IN ANGOLA AND MOZAMBIQUE. IN ANGOLA, THE COMMUNISTS APPEAR TO HAVE REPAIRED RELATIONS WITH THE MPLA WHICH WERE DAMAGED BY PCP COMPLICITY IN THE MAY 1977 COUP ATTEMPT. THE SOCIALIST PARTY (PS), DESPITE ITS LEADERSHIP ROLE IN THE GOP AND MUCH EFFORT, HAS HAD ONLY LIMITED SUCCESS IN WEANING AWAY FRELIMO AND THE MPLA FROM THE PCP. THE THREE DEMOCRATIC PARTIES BELIEVE A SUCCESSFUL PRESIDENTIAL SUMMIT WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR EFFORTS TO DISPLACE THE PCP'S INFLUENCE.

--THE PRESIDENT: PRESIDENT EANES HAS EMERGED AS THE MOST IMPORTANT FORMULATOR OF PORTUGAL'S AFRICAN POLICY FOR SEVERAL REASONS:

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SS-15 ICA-11 AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 EB-08 COME-00
HA-05 ACDA-12 /130 W
-----127196 191834Z /42

P R 191533Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY LISBON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6068
INFO AMEMBASSY BISSAU
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(A) THE LIMITED SUCCESS OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND THE PS
IN ATTAINING PORTUGUESE OBJECTIVES;
(B) HIS AFRICAN MILITARY EXPERIENCE, WHICH IRONICALLY
LENDERS ITSELF TO A CERTAIN ACCEPTANCE BY THE FORMER LIBERATION
LEADERS, MANY OF WHOM ALSO WERE MILITARY LEADERS;
(C) HIS POSITION AS CHIEF OF STATE, WHICH APPEALS TO THE
SENSITIVITIES OF AFRICAN HEADS OF STATE WHO PREFER HIGHLY
PERSONALIZED RELATIONS WITH THEIR COUNTERPARTS.
INDEED, IT IS THE EFFORTS OF EANES, MORE THAN ANY OTHER GOP
POLICY MAKER, WHICH HAVE BROUGHT ABOUT THE CURRENT UPSWING
IN GOP RELATIONS WITH THE EX-COLONIES, AND WHICH HAVE
CULMINATED IN THE PROMISED MEETING WITH NETO.

4. FOCUS ON NETO AND EANES: WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE
COMMUNISTS, ALL THE MAJOR FOREIGN POLICY ACTORS WILL PLAY
A ROLE IN THE NETO BILATERAL. BRUISED SENSITIVITIES
OVER WHAT SOME IN THE GOP, INCLUDING SOARES,
REGARD AS PARALLEL DIPLOMACY BY THE PRESIDENCY
ARE BEING PUSHED ASIDE. FOR THE GOP, THE IMPLICATIONS
OF ITS SUCCESS OR FAILURE ARE SIGNIFICANT:
--IF THE MEETING SUCCEEDS, RELATIONS WITH GUINEA BISSAU
AND CAPE VERDE WILL BE CEMENTED, AND MOZAMBIQUE WILL NOT
WANT TO BE LEFT OUT IN THE COLD. THE GOP WILL HAVE
VALUABLE BAGGAGE IN TOW WHEN TALKING TO WESTERN NATIONS.
--IF IT FAILS, NOT ONLY WILL THE GOP BE EMBARRASSED, BUT
GUINEA BISSAU AND CAPE VERDE, WHO HAVE ALSO PUSHED FOR THE
MEETING, WILL LOSE AS WELL. MOZAMBIQUE WILL LIKELY MAINTAIN
ITS CAUTIOUS APPROACH TO THE GOP. DOMESTIC DISSATISFACTION
WITH PORTUGAL'S AFRICAN POLICY WILL BE STIMULATED AND

PORTUGAL WILL FEEL DOUBLY POOR AS IT SEEKS ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE
FROM THE WEST.
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5. THE OTHER DIRECTION ON THE BRIDGE: DESPITE ITS AMBITIONS,
THE GOP KNOWS IT HAS ONLY LIMITED RESOURCES TO PROMOTE ITS
AFRICAN OBJECTIVES. FOR THIS REASON, THE GOP HAS SUGGESTED
THAT INTERNATIONAL FINANCING OF PORTUGUESE AID PROJECTS
WOULD BENEFIT ALL CONCERNED (REF A). THE GOP HAS ALSO SOUGHT
TO ALIGN ITS AFRICAN POLICIES WITH THOSE OF OTHER WESTERN
NATIONS, PARTICULARLY THE U.S., BECAUSE:

-- PORTUGAL CAN ILL-AFFORD TO BE AT ODDS WITH ITS BENEFACTORS
OVER A MAJOR POLICY ISSUE;
-- THE BRIDGE WORKS TWO WAYS; THE GOP WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO
TELL THE AFRICANS THAT PORTUGAL HOLDS THE KEY TO POTENTIAL
BENEFITS FROM OTHER WESTERN COUNTRIES.

6. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE U.S.: IN ANTICIPATION OF THE EANES
NETO SUMMIT, THE PORTUGUESE HAVE SOUGHT OUR VIEWS ON
AFRICAN POLICY AND PARTICULARLY ON ANGOLA (REF B). A
SUCCESSFUL SUMMIT COULD YIELD BENEFITS FOR THE U.S. IN
REINFORCING A CHANNEL TO THE ANGOLANS, AND
PERHAPS ALSO TO THE MOZAMBICANS. ALSO, A PORTUGAL BUOYED
BY IMPROVING AFRICAN RELATIONS WILL FACE ITS EUROPEAN OPTION
AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WITH GREATER CONFIDENCE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, DEPENDENCIES, DEPENDENCY GOVERNMENT
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978LISBON04495
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780255-0630
Format: TEL
From: LISBON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780645/aaaabmns.tel
Line Count: 363
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b3fa4086-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 7
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 LISBON 4406, 78 LISBON 4356
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2300834
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PORTUGUESE RELATIONS WITH THE FORMER COLONIES: AN ASSESSMENT
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, AO, PO, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b3fa4086-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014